Seismic zones in the Country

3314. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the country has been divided into four seismic zones by the Bureau of Indian Standards;

(b) if so, the details of the four zones;

(c) when was this last received; and

(d) whether Government propose to revise this based on the seismic activities in the country in recent past?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (d) As per seismic zoning map of the country prepared by Bureau of Indian Standards, India has been divided into four seismic zones, namely, Zone-ll to V, based on the various scientific inputs including, past earthquakes, their intensity, geology and seismotectomics of the region. Zone-V is considered to be most seismically active, while Zone-ll is the least. Broadly, zone-V includes entire North Eastern India, parts of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Rann of Kutch, parts of North Bihar and Andaman and Nicobar Islands region. Zone-IV covers, parts of J&K and Himachal Pradesh, NCT of Delhi, Sikkim, Northern parts of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal, parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan and a small portion of Maharashtra. Zone-Ill encompasses Kerala, Goa, Lakshadweep Islands, remaining parts of UP, Gujarat and West Bengal, parts of Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The remaining parts of the country lie in seismic Zone-ll. The zoning map was last revised in the year 2002. At present there is no proposal to further revise the zoning map.

Highways under Golden Quadrilateral

3315. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are expected to spend at least 18 per cent more than the estimated cost of Rs. 30,300 crore for widening the highways under the Golden Quadrilateral Project; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor, and the details of the escalation in cost?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The original estimated cost of Golden Quadrilateral Project at 1999 price was Rs.25,055 crore (excluding interest during construction (IDC) and escalation). The expenditure as on 30.11.2005 on the project is Rs. 23559.21 crore. The final cost indication would be known after completion of all projects. However, the actual expenditure on the project is not likely to differ much from the estimated cost, allowing for normal inflation.

Safety on the National Highways

3316. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to setting up of a regulatory body to oversee the safety on the National Highways;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Committee on infrastructure has been recommended for setting up of such a body;

(c) if so, by when such a recommendation be made by the above committee; and

(d) what are the reasons for delay in setting up such a regulatory authority?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRIT.R. BAALU): (a) to (d)A Committee has been appointed to deliberate and recommend on creation of a dedicated body on Road Safety and Traffic Regulations under the Chairmanship of Shri S. Sundar, Sr. Fellow, The Energy Research Institute. The Committee has been remitted to submit its recommendations by 31st January, 2006 to enable a final decision by Committee On Infrastructure chaired by the Prime Minister.

Shipping companies neglecting sea farers

3317. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the sea farers are easily abandoned and neglected by the shipping companies and ship owners despite the fact that they are the backbone of maritime economy which in turn drives the world economy;